

Volusia County Schools  
~School Board Notes~

November 10, 2015  
School Board Meeting

**SCHOOL DISTRICT UPDATE**

The school board heard an update regarding the budget and the district's fund balance. Over the past six years, the district has relied on the fund balance to provide raises to employees. Raises given to employees in 2014-15 cost the general fund \$8.3 million. Even with cuts, the district still used \$6.3 million to balance the 2015-16 budget. School board policy is to keep the unassigned fund balance at 3% with a goal of 5%. If the fund balance falls below 3%, the state must be notified. If it falls below 2%, the state could take over the financial operations of the school district. The district must get its financial house in order. A fund balance restoration plan will be presented to the school board in the spring.

Volusia is at a disadvantage regarding funding because of the District Cost Differential (DCD), which is part of the state's funding formula. Since 2004, Volusia has lost \$120 million due to the DCD, more than any of the surrounding districts. In addition, Volusia voters did not support the additional 1MILL tax levy in 2012, which would have generated \$30 million in revenue this fiscal year. Seminole and Orange both have that additional revenue for their respective school districts.

The district will continue to explore all areas where efficiencies can be gained in operations and will maximize the use of alternative funding sources. A health insurance subsidy cap would save the district substantial money and enable the district to know its costs; however, this option must be negotiated with the bargaining units. Currently, Volusia contributes the most to employee health insurance when compared to surrounding districts. The district has offered a proposal to the unions to make no salary or benefit changes for the current year and to use savings from changes to the health insurance subsidy to fund salary increases for 2016-17. Savings realized would be reoccurring and not dependent on the fund balance, allowing salary increases to be budgeted each year.

The school board heard an update from GCA, the firm that provides custodial services for the school district. Staffing is at 410 employees, some of which are part-time. Averaging the district inspection scores with GCA's internal inspection scores and survey scores from principals, yields a rating of 87%.

**EMPLOYEE HEALTH INSURANCE**

The school board heard a [presentation](#) regarding employee health insurance. School board members voted to postpone the release of a Request for Proposal (RFP) and instead to

begin negotiations with existing providers. As directed at the October 27 board meeting, staff requested rates from the current health care providers. The proposals show no changes to the plan design for the current year; however, the school board has the option of renewing for two years, which could result in additional savings. This would require plan design changes effective October 1, 2016. The insurance committee will review the options and make a recommendation to the school board in January 2016.

### **STUDENT UNIFORM POLICY**

The school board approved moving forward with amendments to Policy 217, *Student Appearance and Dress Code*. A draft will be presented to the school board for consideration at the December 8 meeting.

### **LEARNING WALKS, RIGOR AND COLLABORATION**

The school board heard a presentation highlighting initiatives at River Springs Middle that are being undertaken to enhance student engagement and academic achievement. Three essential elements include collaboration, rigor and learning walks. The initiatives will help the school reach its school improvement plan goal of scoring in the top one-third on state and district assessments.

### **2016-17 SCHOOL CALENDAR**

The school board approved the [2016-17 school calendar](#). The first day of school for students will be August 15, 2016; spring break is scheduled for March 13-17, 2017; and the last day for students will be prior to Memorial Day on May 26, 2017.

### **RESOLUTION**

The school board approved a [resolution](#) recognizing School Psychology Awareness Week, November 9-13, 2015.

### **CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS**

The school board approved the consent agenda, including the following items:

- School Improvement Plans for all elementary, middle, high and charter schools, including alternative education. The plans for the 2015-16 school year are [online](#).
- Submittal of an [application](#) to Lowe's Charitable and Education Foundation to upgrade the computer lab at George Marks Elementary.
- [Agreement](#) with iQ onsite for a smart phone app, Parent Information Exchange (PIX), designed for parents to receive information from their children's schools. The app is being piloted by select schools for the 2015-16 school year. It is anticipated the app will be implemented in all schools during the 2016-17 school year.

### **NEXT SCHOOL BOARD MEETINGS**

**Organizational Session:** Tuesday, November 17, 9 a.m., DeLand Administrative Complex, 200 N. Clara Ave., DeLand

**Regular Meeting:** Tuesday, December 8, 4 p.m., DeLand Administrative Complex

During school board meetings, a live audio broadcast can be accessed from the School District of Volusia County's website at <http://myvolusiaschools.org>.

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